

4-21-2014

The Effects of Masculinity and Trauma on Prosocial Behaviors

Kyle Brasil

College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, Boise State University

The Effects of Masculinity and Trauma on Prosocial Behaviors

Kyle M. Brasil
Faculty advisor: Dr. M. Rose Barlow

Boise State University

Introduction

- Researchers have focused on the negative effects of masculinity ranging from the personal sacrifices, health detriments to men, and the effects on men’s social interactions and roles (O’Neil, 1981). There has also been growing interest about the possibilities of positive outcomes from trauma. This is referred to as post traumatic growth and there are implications that the prosocial behaviors of a trauma victim may actually increase after the experience of a traumatic event (Frazier et al., 2012; Music, 2011; Staub & Volhardt, 2008). This implies that after going through a trauma a victim’s prosocial tendencies may go up. Portions of masculinity have also been linked to prosocial behaviors, which is any behavior that may benefit another. Traditional masculine roles call for a man to be a stoic hero who provides and cares for others (Fox & Pease, 2012; O’Neil, 1981). Although research is lacking in this area, men are more likely to help in situations where their helping can be seen by others, thus fulfilling this role (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2013).
- After going through a traumatic experience, men feel a need to reestablish their masculinity to heal their self-identity (Fox & Pease, 2012; O’Neil, 1981). Considering the given research on trauma leading to prosocial behaviors and implicating men needing to reestablish their masculinity, this led me to inquire if this could be positively accomplished in men suffering from trauma through prosocial behaviors.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis: Men who scored higher in masculinity would score higher in prosocial tendencies after a trauma more than any other group.

Method

Participants

The sample was made up of 125 males, ranging in age from 18 – 50 ($M = 20.83$, $SD = 4.38$). Participants came from the general psychology student pool at Boise State University (BSU) who enrolled in the experiment using a web-based program, SONA. Participants were awarded credit for their general psychology course for their participation in this study.

Materials

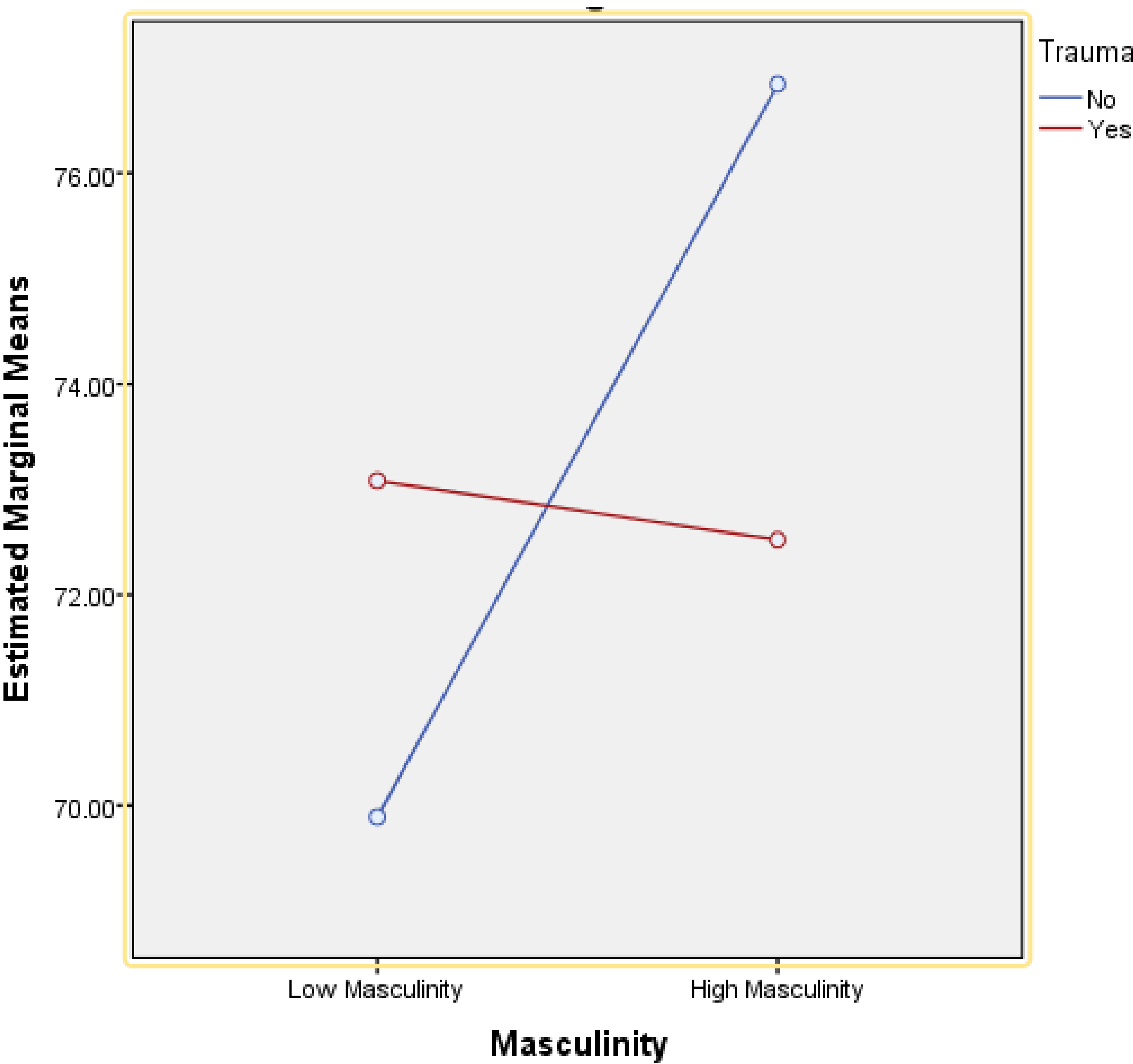
- Male Roles Norms Inventory – Short Form (MRNI-SF; Levant, Hall, & Rankin, 2013) a newer 21-item 7-point Likert type scale used to asses traditional masculinity ideology, which has good reliability.
- Adult Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM; Carlo & Randall, 2002) a 23-item 5-point Likert type scale used to asses prosocial tendencies, which has good reliability.
- Posttraumatic Stress Diagnostic Scale (PDS; Foa, Cashman, Jaycox, & Perry, 1997) a 12-item check list of traumas experienced by participants.

Procedure

The three measures were part of larger omnibus survey that had a total of 160-items, presented in an online format. All participants provided informed consent.

Results

Prosocial Tendencies on Masculinity vs. Trauma



Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>ES</i>
Between treatments	291.69	3	97.23	1.12	.317	.033
Masculinity	173.89	1	173.89	2.13	.148	.02
Trauma	5.46	1	5.46	.07	.797	.001
Masculinity x Trauma	240.68	1	240.68	2.95	.089	.027
Within treatments	8660.31	110	81.70			
Total	8952.00	109				

I conducted a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) between the masculine groups and trauma groups on their PTM scores. There was no significant difference on the main effect of masculinity [$F(1, 106) = 2.13$, $p = .148$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$]. There was no significant effect for the main effect of trauma [$F(1, 106) = .07$, $p = .797$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$]. Interaction between factors was not significant [$F(1, 106) = 2.95$, $p = .089$, partial $\eta^2 = .027$]. Overall there were fewer men reporting not having experienced a trauma.

Discussion

The results of my study did not support my hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the groups and their scores on the PTM. As men increased in masculinity their PTM scores increased in the no trauma group, and men’s PTM scores decreased as masculinity increased in the trauma group. This implies that there are positives to masculinity.

Future research should investigate the implications represented in the graph. Future research should also take into consideration the subscales of masculinity to see if there is any difference between them on PTM scores. Research is also needed on if increasing prosocial behavior helps more masculine men recover after a trauma and its implications in clinical settings and therapies.

References

- Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2013). *Social psychology* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Carlo, G., & Randall, B. A. (2002). The development of a measure of prosocial behaviors for late adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31, 31-44.
- Foa, E. B., Cashman, L., Jaycox, L., & Perry, K. (1997). The validation of a self-report measure of posttraumatic stress disorder: The Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale. *Psychological Assessment*, 9, 445-451. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.9.4.445
- Fox, J., & Pease, B. (2012). Military deployment, masculinity and trauma: Reviewing the connections. *The Journal of Men’s Studies*, 20, 16-31. doi:10.3149/jms.2001.1.16
- Frazier, P., Greer, C., Gabrielsen, S., Tennen, H., Park, C., & Tomich, P. (2012). The relation between trauma and prosocial behavior. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 5, 286-294. doi:10.1037/a0027255
- Levant, R. F., Hall, R. J., & Rankin, T. J. (2013). Male Role Norms Inventory-Short Form (MRNI-SF): Development, confirmatory factor analytic investigation of structure, and measurement invariance across gender. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, 228-238. doi:10.1037/a0031545
- Music, G. (2011). Trauma, helpfulness and selfishness: The effect of abuse and neglect on altruistic, moral and pro-social capacities. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 37, 113-128. doi:10.1080/0075417X.2011.581466
- O’Neil, J. (1981). Patterns of gender role conflict and strain: Sexism and fear of femininity in men’s lives. *Personnel & Guidance Journal*, 60, 203-210. doi:10.1002/j.2164-4918.1981.tb00282.x
- Staub, E., & Vollhardt, J. (2008). Altruism born of suffering: The roots of caring and helping after victimization and other trauma. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 78, 267-280. doi:10.1037/a0014223